

Madison FOURSQUARE

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This issue of *Madison Foursquare* is brought to you by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704.

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This is *Madison Foursquare* #21, created using a Mac Pro with InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, all CC 2018, and printed on a Ricoh Aficio CL7200 color printer.

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Cover

[SC] Great cover, Andy. The perfect vision of a “party animal” if I ever saw one.

[JG] Sort of reminds me of the costume Doctor Bill wore on the last day of his hospital rounds after he’d earned his M.D.

Greg Rhin

[SC] Your description of the Maya exhibit was fascinating. Definitely an item to add to our list of possible things to see in Milwaukee if we make a trip out there before Wisconsin. Although *The Shape of Water* was not my first choice for the best picture Oscar this year, I was delighted that an old fashioned monster movie was made with such a beautiful script, fine acting, high production values and enough soul to be a legitimate best picture contender.

We recently saw, and I recommend, the movie *The Death of Stalin* with Steve Buscemi as Khrushchev, Simon Beale as Beria, Jeffrey Tambor as Malenkov, and Michael Palin as Molotov. The movie is a rough summary of events that occurred when Stalin suddenly collapsed and died in 1953. The movie trailer leads you to think that the movie is a slapstick comedy. It is a comedy, but the humor is played against the backdrop of real terror and many of the events depicted really happened at one point or another. It’s a hilarious movie with an edge, and I loved it.

[JG] Me too.

Re the Mayan exhibit: Ah, the old story of anthropological cultural bias... Like the mysterious ceremonies witnessed in the 19th century that turned out to be managed by women, who were never asked about the ceremony because the anthropologists could not conceive of women being in charge. So much lost information—languages, ideas, art and knowledge.

Cheese-on-top pizzas is new? That’s how I’ve always made it and, I think, the only way I’ve seen it in restaurants. But perhaps I am mistaken and have just been making another one of those silly cultural assumptions based on the way I do things. We’ve got a couple newish Neopolitan Italian restaurants in town, and I agree with you that the pizzas are very good. One of them, Novanta in Middleton, is like Capri di Nuovo and also makes pizzas to order. I like ordering them without tomato sauce.

I liked *The Shape of Water* too. I thought it was a really interesting retelling of a Selkie tale, with Elisa being the mermaid who has (unknowingly?) traded her voice for a human body, but who recognizes her true self in the amphibian man. // Watching James Comey speak this past week, it suddenly struck me that the excellent actor, Michael Shannon could play Comey in one of the many movies about the Trump years that will inevitably be made.

We missed *Early Man*. It came and went so fast, zoom. I have been watching the schedule of Market Theater which shows films that have left town in other theaters, but that may not be an option soon. Weirdly, the new owners of the Market Square shopping mall have decided to rescind permission for theater customers to use the parking lot. We can only suppose that the new owners are trying to get current leaseholders to move out so that the new owners can build something new.

Whether it’s actually supper club tradition or not, I like the idea of ordering before getting seated at your table. Sounds like a rational way to deal with a crowded restaurant and avoid, as much as possible, tables being occupied by non-eating patrons. Marigold’s restaurant here in Madison does something similar to deal with its long lines of waiting brunch patrons. I’m going to try to remember the 5 o’clock Steakhouse for the next time we’re in Milwaukee and in the mood for steak. It sounds great.

Jim Hudson

[SC] It was fun going with you and Diane to *Beau Soleil* at Stoughton Opera House. We should have wished you a happy anniversary. It’s a beautiful old facility and I always look forward to going to a few shows there every year, seat cushion firmly in hand.

[JG] I was so very impressed by the actor Storm Reid who played Meg in *A Wrinkle in Time*. She moved from moody, bad-tempered, selfish teen to an actual hero. When she stood up in the last few scenes, her shoulders back, her voice steady and sure—I honestly thought that witch’s comparisons of her to historic, heroic figures was apt. I’m betting that Reid is going to make a lot of great movies.

Kim and Kathi Nash

[SC] Even after poor Carl's passing, the saga continues. And it carries on with one of the most annoying possible developments, a tug of war over the poor guy's estate. Crap! After all you have done and now you have to deal with this. It's frustrating to read this, but please keep us posted on the drama and best wishes to you in your fight to resolve it.

[JG] I'm so sorry you have to deal with greedy relatives after Carl's death and hope you don't have to spend much time or money dealing with lawyers!

Jae Leslie Adams

[SC] Thank you for the David Fromkin book review on the Middle East. Sounds like the perfect place to start on a project to try to get some sort of handle on modern Middle East politics, especially since it appears that the U.S. is destined to be sucked into the whole mess for the foreseeable future.

On our return leg of our trip to Vermont this month, we will be coming back home via the U.P. Maybe we will get a chance to swing by Da Yoopers Tourist Trap and the snowmobile henge.

[JG] You might be interested in Mary Doria Russell's novel, *Dreamers of the Day*, about [quoting from Google Books:] "a forty-year-old schoolteacher from Ohio still reeling from the tragedies of the Great War and the influenza epidemic who comes into a modest inheritance that allows her to take the trip of a lifetime to Egypt and the Holy Land. Arriving at the Semiramis Hotel, site of the 1921 Cairo Peace Conference, she meets Winston Churchill, T.E. Lawrence, and Lady Gertrude Bell. With her plainspoken American opinions, she becomes a sounding board for these historic luminaries who will, in the space of a few days, invent the nations of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan." I remember liking it quite a bit and that it made me wish I'd been able to see the one-woman play at APT some years back about Lady Gertrude Bell (starring Sarah Day). Sadly, I had a date with a surgeon that weekend. It's a horrifyingly fascinating time when all these guys were moving people and cultures around like they were pieces in a chess game, with no idea of how enormous the repercussions would be on the rest of the world.

Andy Hooper

[SC] Yes, please, I would like to see new version .pdf with the new picture of Alfred. Please email a copy to me.

I'm a little sad to see the end of your list of Nycon attendees. As interesting as they often were, I was also entertained by your carefully researched efforts to try to identify (or narrow down to the most likely candidate) the unknown attendees where you had a name and little else

to go on, such as Warren Woolsey and Arthur Young. Your online research superpower is kinda awesome, dude.

Thanks again and always for the Entropy Department entries. They were all fun to read, but I thought Kay Anderson's was especially a hoot. And what can you say about Ted White? As soon as I start to read his work, I hear his voice in my head and I feel like I could happily read on for days.

[JG] The University of Iowa Special Collection of fanzines is great. The guy in charge of it is Peter Balestrieri, previously of the *Violent Femmes*. Saying this makes me sound much more knowledgeable about music than I actually am. Scott and I had to go to Iowa City a couple years ago for a funeral, and Debbie Notkin had just asked me to mail copies of the two Tiptree cookbooks to the UI Library, to the special collection there. When I realized that the hotel we'd be staying at was just a couple blocks from the library, I decided to deliver them in person. I was treated like a visiting celebrity when I walked in ("Oh my god, it's Jeanne Gomoll. She's here in person!!"), which really surprised me. Apparently Peter knew a lot about WisCon and the Tiptree Award, and even *Janus* and *Aurora*. So we talked a while, and when I re-joined Scott downstairs where he was reading in a lounge area, I mentioned Peter's full name, and discovered that I should really have given Peter the celebrity treatment and I should at the very least have brought Scott along to meet Peter Balestrieri. Let me know if you want his contact info, Andy.

I have no doubt that rapprochement will eventually happen, that future generations of the WisCon conglom will eventually reach out to us WisCon veterans as the conflicts recede into the past and disappear from the central concerns of the committee. In fact, it's begun to happen even faster than I would have expected. Last year, the chair, who was a person I had never met (I'm very much out of touch with what is happening on the committee), referred a visiting French journalist/fan to interview me about WisCon. What?, I thought. They want ME to represent the convention?? Obviously the current chair wasn't up to date on the previous year's enemy list. I think that quite a few people who joined the conglom a few years ago did so to fight a battle, that never really materialized when Jim and I simply walked away, there was just a lot of work that needed to be done. It seems that some of the energy that electrified those who joined the coup as warrior, may not be the sort of energy that keeps people engaged in con work.

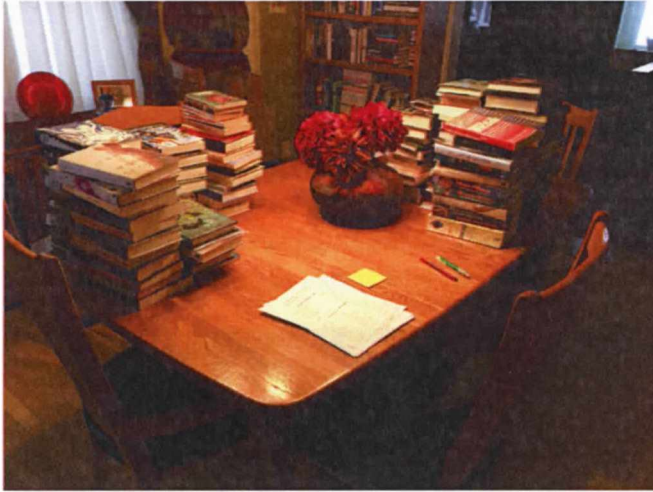
Sorry, we will be in the UP by early May and back home by May 3 and won't be at Corflu.

Julie Zachman

[SC] I think it's great there are folks like you taking care of rescue dogs. Jeanne and I just made a short trip down to Janesville to see our friend Elizabeth and meet her rescue greyhound, Nicky. Nicky is a lovely dog, but Elizabeth

is also taking care of him on her own, which I think is a big job. Elizabeth and Nicky may be staying with us over WisCon weekend. If that happens it will be the most time I will have spent around a dog in many years. I'm looking forward to it.

What's New



[JG] We leave on our road trip in two days. I spent much of Wednesday and Thursday stacking up books on our dining room table: all of them Tiptree Award winners or Honor listees. It turns out that I own one copy of every Tiptree winner except for Kessel's short story, "Stories for Men." I also have about 60 titles from the various honor lists. I am donating them all to the University of Michigan Special Tiptree Award Collection, along with copies of all of the Tiptree publications, the cookbooks, the anthologies, the quilt story, and a few others. We will meet with three librarians on Monday on the East Lansing campus and I will fill out several forms certifying my donation. And then we will leave 4 big boxes of books in Michigan. I figure that once I've done this—given away some of the most personally valuable books I own, letting go of other items on our very crowded bookshelves will be easy. It's something I have been wanting to do since acting as executor for my parents and more recently, for my sister's estate. Some stuff I want to make sure goes to the right place and doesn't get lost in estate-chaos.

I sent the *Space Babe Coloring Book* to press a few days ago. A proof copy will arrive in Vermont, where we will be visiting friends next week. I can't wait to see it.

We went to see the Forward Theater's play *Margorie Prime*, a purportedly science fiction play, that neither Scott or I thought was very good science fiction. Ideas were brought up and never developed or explored; on our way home, Scott and I came up with a half dozen much more interesting stories that might have followed from the play's idea of androids created to mimic deceased loved ones in order to help the living humans deal with the loss. Actually, the idea sounds like a *Black Mirror* plot, but the playwright, Jordan

Harrison, never took the idea in an interesting direction. In addition, one of the characters was so irritating that, at one point, Scott leaned over and whispered to me "I am going to have to kill her." Forward Theater's season this year and for the past few years has been mostly excellent. It's a shame that the last play of the season was such a disappointment to us.

Oh, and go see the movie *Isle of Dogs*! It's funny, really well written and absolutely mesmerizing stop motion animation. I keep hearing people say that you have to appreciate Japanese Anime in order to like this movie, but I know next to nothing about Anime, and I thought it was wonderful. I wouldn't mind seeing it again.

And then there is the not-very-Springlike weather we've been having. We just hope none of this follows us on our roadtrip. See you all next month!

Jeanne & Scott, April 2018

